



Workshop on the development of the regional environmental management plan for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean, with a focus on management assessment

18-21 May, 2026
Busan, Republic of Korea

Terms of Reference

The International Seabed Authority (ISA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, will convene an expert workshop on the development of a regional environmental management plan (REMP) for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean, from 18-21 May 2026, in Busan, the Republic of Korea.

Background

In pursuance of its mandate under Article 145 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Council of ISA approved an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) in 2012.¹ During the 24th Session, the Council agreed with the priority areas for the development of new regional environmental management plans (REMPs) that had been identified on a preliminary basis as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the Indian Ocean triple junction ridge and nodule-bearing province, and the north-west Pacific Ocean.²

Since 2018, nine expert workshops have been convened by ISA in collaboration with various Member States and partner organizations to support the development and review of REMPs in the CCZ, Mid-Atlantic Ridge, north-west Pacific and Indian Oceans. Over 450 experts from more than 55 countries, as well as representatives from other regional and international organizations, have participated and contributed to this process.

In July 2025, the Council of ISA, on recommendation from the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC), adopted the standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of REMPs, providing a coherent approach to REMP processes in different regions in the Area (hereafter

¹ See ISBA/17/LTC/7; ISBA/17/C/19 and ISBA/18/C/22.

² See ISBA/24/C/8.

“standardized procedure”).³ One of the steps in the standardized procedure for the development of a REMP is a management assessment, conducted through expert deliberations to develop proposals for management measures and implementation strategies for a REMP.

In this context, the ISA Secretariat is partnering with the Government of the Republic of Korea in convening a workshop on the development of the REMP for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean. This workshop will build on the outcomes from previous scientific-focused workshops,⁴ and advance discussions on the management measures and implementation strategies for a REMP, in line with the standardized procedure.

Objectives

As set out in the standardized procedure, the management-oriented expert deliberations will focus on reviewing or identifying:

- (a) Region-specific objectives to achieve the overarching environmental goals and objectives;⁵
- (b) Area-based and other types of management measures to achieve the goals and objectives;
- (c) Priorities and a strategy for environmental research and monitoring at the regional scale to assess the effectiveness of the REMP, including addressing the information and knowledge gaps identified; and
- (d) Implementation strategies, including collaboration and cooperation.

The focus of this workshop is expected to be on area-based and other types of management measures (objective b), in line with the overarching environmental goal and objectives identified in the standardized procedure. In this context, the discussion on regional monitoring under objective C will focus on marine scientific research and regional environmental assessment to inform future review of the REMP. Discussion of implementation strategies under objective (d) will include considerations of coherence with, and lessons learned from, management measures adopted by other competent international and regional bodies.

Preparation and anticipated duration of the workshop

Prior to the workshop, a background document will be provided by the co-chairs, outlining the key elements of a draft REMP for this region that is being developed by the LTC. Participants will be invited to share relevant information, views, and comments on this draft during the workshop, in line with the above objectives.

In the beginning of the workshop, participants will be briefed on the process leading to the formulation of the draft REMP, main outcomes from the scientific workshops, including some proposals for area-based and other management tools.

The workshop will be conducted over a 4-day period, during which participants are expected to engage in plenary as well as breakout group discussions dedicated to specific issues/questions. A detailed agenda will be available in due course.

³ See ISA/30/C/20 and ISBA/30/C/21.

⁴ Reports from previous, science-based workshops available at [Progress in other priority regions - International Seabed Authority](#)

⁵ Noting the overarching environmental goal and objectives in ISBA/30/C/21.

Expected outcomes

After the workshop, a workshop report will be prepared by the designated LTC co-chairs with assistance from the Secretariat. A draft of this report will be circulated to workshop participants for comments and inputs, before being finalized by the workshop co-chairs. The workshop report intends to address the following topics, including areas of agreement and disagreement among workshop participants, as appropriate:

- Proposed management goals and objectives, if necessary, to address the overarching goal and objectives of the REMP as outlined in the standardized procedure;
- Proposed management measures for area-based management tools (ABMTs), including potential boundaries, configuration and restrictions on activities to be applied within individual ABMTs in the Area;
- Non-spatial management measures, if applicable;
- Priorities, opportunities and feasibility for marine scientific research and regional environmental assessment; and
- Strategies needed to implement the REMP, including but not limited to, collaboration in marine scientific research and capacity development.

The draft workshop report will be submitted to the LTC for its consideration. The results of the workshop and report will inform the LTC in further progressing its work on the REMP for the Northwest Pacific Ocean.